

The Servant

A simple story about the true essence of leadership.

The ideas I stand for are not my own. I borrowed them from Socrates, I swiped them from Chesterfield, I stole them from Jesus. And if you don't like their ideas, whose ideas would you rather use? (Dale Carnegie)

Being in power is like being a lady. If you have to remind people that you are, you aren't. (Margaret Thatcher)

Leadership: The skill of influencing people to work enthusiastically toward goals identified as being for the common good.

A skill is simply a learned or acquired ability.

Power: the ability to force or coerce someone to do your will, even if they would choose not to, because of the position or your might.

Authority: The skill of getting people to willingly do your will because of your personal influence.

Power erodes relationships. You can get a few seasons out of power, even accomplish some things, but over time power can be very damaging to relationships.

We had to resort to our power because our authority had broken down. Or worse, perhaps we didn't have any authority to begin with.

The key to leadership is accomplishing the tasks at hand while building relationships.

Your feelings of respect must be aligned with your actions of respect.

We do not see the world as it is, we see the world as we are. The world looks very different depending on your perspective. The world looks different if I am rich or poor, sick or healthy, young or old, black or white.

The new paradigm, leadership, continuous improvement, change is a constant and zero defects.

I said that leaders should identify and meet the needs of their people, serve them. I did not say that they should identify and meet the wants of their people, be slaves to them. Slaves do what the others want, servants do what others need. There is a world of difference between meeting wants and meeting needs.

A want the teacher explained is simply a wish or desire without any regard for the physical or psychological consequences. A need on the other hand, is a legitimate physical or psychological requirement for the well being of a human being.

If the role of the leader is to identify and meet the legitimate needs of the people, then we should be constantly asking ourselves, “What are the needs of the people I lead?” I would challenge you to make a list of the needs your people have wherever you lead.

Anyone wanting to be the leader must first be the servant. If you want to lead, you must serve. (Jesus Christ)

In your staff meetings if all ten of you agree on everything, then nine of you are probably unnecessary.

Intentions plus actions equals the will. It is only when our actions are aligned with our intentions that we become congruent people and congruent leaders.

I don't necessarily have to like my players and associates but as the leader I must love them. Love is loyalty, love is teamwork, love respects the dignity of the individual. This is the strength of any organization (Vince Lombardi)

When Jesus speaks of love in the New Testament the word agape is used, a love of behavior and choice, not a love of feeling.

I cannot always control how I feel about other people but I certainly am in control of how I behave toward other people.

It says essentially that love is patient, kind, not puffed up or arrogant, does not behave unbecomingly, does not seek its own, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, endures all things. Love never fails. The same qualities you need to be a leader.

Patience-showing self-control.

Kindness-giving attention, appreciation and encouragement.

Active listening requires a disciplined effort to silence all that internal conversation while we are attempting to listen to someone else.

One of the primary works of love is paying attention to people.

At the core of the human personality is the need to feel appreciated. If you disagree you are lying.

A wise general once said that a man would never sell his life to you but he will give it to you for a piece of colored ribbon.

Receiving praise is a legitimate human need and is essential to healthy relationships. There are two important things to remember about praising people. One, is that the praise must be sincere. Two, it must be specific. Just walking in and saying everyone

did a great job is insufficient and may cause resentment because everyone may have not done a good job.

Humility-being authentic and without pretense or arrogance.

We want leaders who are authentic, the ability to be real with people. We don't want them to be arrogant. Egos can really get in the way and become barriers with people. Know it alls and arrogant leaders can turn people off. Such arrogance is also a dishonest pretense because nobody knows it all or has it all together. Humility to me is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking about yourself less.

We need each other, arrogance and pride pretend we don't. The lie of rugged individualism that is so prevalent in this country creates an illusion that we are not and should not be dependent upon other people.

Humbleness is nothing more than a true knowing of yourself and your limitations. Those who see themselves as they truly would surely be humble indeed. Humility is about being real and authentic with people and discarding the false masks.

Respectfulness-treating others as important people.

The leader has a vested interest in the success of those being led. One of our roles as leaders is to assist them in becoming successful.

When people are late they are saying their time is more important than my time, a rather arrogant message to be sending me. Being late also conveys the message that I must not be very important to them because they would almost certainly be on time for an important person. It also communicates to me they are not very honest because honest people stick to their word and follow through with their commitments, even time commitments. Being late is very disrespectful and is also habit forming.

Selflessness-meeting the needs of others.

Forgiveness-giving up resentment when wronged.

Assertive behavior is being open, honest, and direct with others but is always done in a respectful manner.

Most of us have known people who hang on to resentments year after year and become bitter and unhappy.

Honesty-being free from deception.

Honesty is about clarifying expectations for people, holding people accountable, being willing to give the bad news as well as the good news, giving people feedback, being consistent, predictable, and fair.

Commitment-sticking to your choices.

The principles we are discussing require enormous energy and if you are not committed as a leader, you will probably give up and resort back to power.

Everyone wants to be involved but nobody wants to be committed. The next time you're sitting down eating eggs and bacon remember this, the chicken was involved but the pig was committed.

True commitment is a vision about individual and group growth along with continuous improvement. The committed leader is dedicated to growing, stretching, and continuously improving-committed to becoming the best leader they can be and that the people they lead deserve. It is also a passion for the people and the team, pushing them to become the best they can be. However, we must never dare to ask the people we lead to become the best they can be, to strive toward continuous improvement, unless we're willing to grow and become the best we can be. This requires commitment, passion, and a vision on the part of the leader of where he or she and the group are headed.

We all know that feelings come and go and it is the commitment that carries us through.

Many evil men and women have been kind and outgoing with the people they liked. But our true character as the leader is revealed when we have to extend ourselves for the tough ones, when we are put in the crucible and have to love people we don't particularly like.

Men and women want to do a good job. If they are provided the proper environment, they will do so. (Bill Hewlett)

Your actions will always speak louder and are infinitely more important than your words.

Think of how quick we are to forgive ourselves for the blunders and absurdities that creep into our lives. Are we as quick to forgive our neighbors for their blunders and absurdities?

If we are honest with ourselves, don't we sometimes delight, even for a moment, in our neighbor's misfortunes, job losses, divorces, extramarital affairs, and other troubles? We are truly loving our neighbors when we are as concerned about their welfare as we are about our own welfare.

Convinced that the answer to crime has very little to do with what happens in the electric chair and much more with what happens in the high chair.

What does my garden need? Does my garden need to be fertilized with appreciation, recognition, and praise? Does my garden need to be weeded? Do I need to have the pests removed? We all know what happens to a garden if the weeds or pests are allowed

to run wild. My garden needs constant attention and I have faith that if I do my part and nurture my garden, I will get healthy fruit.

What we think or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only thing of consequence is what we do. (John Ruskin)

If the leadership team is on the right page, the rest will follow naturally.

Our behavior also influences our thought and our feelings. When we as human beings make a commitment to focus attention, time, effort, and other resources on someone or something, over time, we begin to develop feelings for the object of our attention.

I make a commitment to love and extend myself for those I serve, and align my actions and behaviors to that commitment, positive regard for those people will follow over time.

Fake it to make it. We are more likely to act ourselves into a feeling than feel ourselves into action.

I think it was Augustine who said we should preach the gospel everywhere we go and use words only when necessary.

I once read about a sociological study done on a hundred people over the age of ninety. They asked one simple question on the survey: If you were to live your life all over again, what would you do differently? The three top answers were that they would risk more, they would reflect more, and they would do more that would live on after they were gone.

One American Indian tribe has an old saying that goes, "When you were born your cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a way that when you die the world cries and you rejoice."

Unfortunately, many people never grow out of the Terrible Two's or the Me First stage and go through life as emotional two year olds dressed in adult clothing, wanting the world to meet their wants and needs. People who fail to grow up become more and more selfish and self-absorbed. They even build emotional walls around their self-centered lives. They will become terrible unhappy and lonely.

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I don know. The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve. Perhaps service and sacrifice are the dues we pay for the privilege of living. (Albert Schweitzer)

It is of no profit to have learned well if you neglect to do well.